

MOZAMBIQUE



REVOLUTION

MOZAMBIQUE LIBERATION FRONT
- FRELIMO -

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Comrade Mondlane addressing freedom fighters
in a military base in Cabo Delgado Province.



A Swedish Journalist among our guerrillas
Mr. Anders Johansson, who last february
visited the liberated areas of Mozambique.



A Public meeting in Free Mozambique.

EDITORIAL

In Mozambique, a new front of armed struggle has been opened by FRELIMO, in the Western Province of TETE. In ZIMBABWE, the nationalists opened the way, putting the racist colonialists in a state of panic. In South Africa, the fascist authorities are aware that "South Africa could become involved in an armed conflict within months, perhaps within weeks..." In Angola, the patriots led by the MPLA have opened the 4th front of the armed struggle, in the LUNDA District. In Latin America, the sparks of armed struggle against the reactionary regimes, USA satellites, are in BOLIVIA, GUATEMALA, COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, BRASIL....In Vietnam, who can ignore the victories of the Vietnamese people, in their fight against international imperialism, led by the Yankees?

The oppressed world is awakening from its slumber, which for many people lasted for centuries. The subjugated peoples take into their hands their destinies, they decide to build themselves the future of their fatherlands. They have learnt that in vital matters such as independence and freedom, each one should count on himself and not wait for outside solutions. A typical case is ZIMBABWE. It is naivety to ask Britain to give independence to the people of ZIMBABWE, toppling Smith and his band. It is unreasonable to believe that an imperialist power may wish to destroy an imperialist set-up of its own creation, replacing it with a popular regime. It is not time for empty talks, for condemning Britain ; what has to be done is to encourage and help the Zimbabwean patriots who took up arms and are reconquering their country.

In the process of the struggle, some become discouraged, saying, "South Africa is very strong, she will soon have atomic weapons! The Rhodesian army is too strong. Portugal has in Africa more than 150,000 soldiers equipped with the most modern weapons." This is true. But, powerful is America - however the people of Vietnam, a small underdeveloped country, are capable of neutralising and destroying the American aggressive machine; the supreme commander of the American forces was dismissed, full of shame, because, despite the immense USA war potential at his disposal, to mow down the Vietnamese patriots, he suffered ignominious defeats - inflicted by whom? by a small people, armed only with their determination to be free.

In Mozambique, we, although not having as yet the same fighting experience as the Vietnamese people - nonetheless, we have a determination equally firm and we are achieving important victories. Our forces have now passed to a phase of attacks and destruction of the enemy military strongholds in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, while in the Province of TETE a new front of armed struggle has been opened.

The repressive colonialist forces seem strong in our countries. But that strength is only apparent: when the real popular struggle is launched, the fragility of those forces manifests itself immediately.

Today we can affirm that those who doubt of the final victory of the popular forces are mistaken. There are basic reasons - political, economical, social and moral to support and guarantee that victory.

FRELIMO

MOZAMBIQUE LIBERATION FRONT

Communiqué'

FRELIMO forces have launched a general offensive aimed at eliminating the remaining vestiges of the Portuguese presence in Cabo Delgado and Niassa Provinces, and in creating conditions for the advancement of the armed struggle to the other provinces.

CABO DELGADO PROVINCE:

During the period between 15th January and the 3rd of March, 1968, more than 100 Portuguese soldiers were killed in fighting in Cabo Delgado. The enemy posts of CHIWAYA, NACATAR, LUSOMA and SIPAKI were attacked and assaulted. Seven military vehicles were destroyed by mines. One aircraft was shot down.

29th January, 1968:

HEAVY ATTACK ON THE POST OF NACATAR

The post of NACATAR was attacked and assaulted by FRELIMO forces, in a combination of our artillery and infantry forces. 5 houses were destroyed, among which was the ammunition store. When our forces were assaulting the post, 3 aircraft arrived and machine-gunned the post. Our fighters directed their fire at the aircraft and shot down one of them, a reconnaissance aircraft, which fell about 120 yards from the post. After that, the other aircraft flew at a very high altitude and limited themselves to flying over the zone, far from it. Our fighters freed 6 nationalists who were arrested in the post, and captured a lot of material - namely, 1 W. German light machine gun(MG-2136), 2 Belgian machine-guns (G-3-FMP-065398 and G-3-065425), 1059 rounds of ammunition, uniforms, blankets, etc.

3rd March, 1968:

FRELIMO guerrillas attacked and assaulted the enemy post of SIPAKI.....

On the 3rd of March, 1968, FRELIMO guerrillas attacked and assaulted the enemy post of SIPAKI, about 15 miles from the post of MACOMIA. The Portuguese forces were almost completely annihilated. The enemy soldiers who were not killed at the moment of the attack tried to escape by throwing themselves into a precipice South of the same post. Our fighters burnt all the buildings of the post. The results of this assault were:-

- 2 enemy soldiers were captured: one Portuguese, JOAO BURGUES GOMES, 20 years old, born in MINHO, Portugal; and one African, puppet.

- A large quantity of war material was captured, among which the following:-

- a) One mortar, cal. 81 mm. and shells
- b) 3 light machine-guns G3
- c) 1 heavy machine-gun
- d) 16 rifles "MAUSER" and 3 boxes of ammunition
- e) 1 grenade-thrower and ammunition
- f) 64 magasins
- g) 27 grenades
- h) 30 bullet-belts
- i) 3 radio-transmitters and one radio-receptor

Other captured material:

Military boots, beds, rain-coats, 1 Portuguese flag, military uniforms, tents, military knapsacks, etc.

NIASSA PROVINCE

During the period between the 23rd of December and the 30th of January, at least 120 enemy soldiers were killed, 3 military lorries were destroyed, and 3 military posts were attacked(MSANGULA CHICONONO and NOVA COIMBRA).

25th January:

FRELIMO forces attacked the enemy post of NOVA COIMBRA, where several enemy units had been concentrated. The attack in which participated our infantry and artillery forces, caused the destruction of 4 houses of the post.

27th January:

The Portuguese soldiers tried to establish a military base, which they intended to give the name MACHADO, in the UNANGO zone. Our guerrillas were informed of the enemy's intention and occupied the strategic points in the zone where the enemy was going to build the base. When the Portuguese soldiers approached the place, they were met with intense fire, suffering 11 killed and many wounded. The enemy desisted from building the base.

TETE PROVINCE:

FRELIMO armed actions against the Portuguese colonialist forces have resumed in TETE Province.

On the 8th of March, 1968, at 7 a.m., our guerrillas ambushed a group of Portuguese soldiers near the village of KASSUENDE, and killed 3 and wounded 5 enemies.

On the same day (8th March), FRELIMO forces attacked the enemy post of MALEVOLA. Four houses were destroyed, as well as water deposit and a lorry. Informations we later received revealed that one sergeant and 8 privates were killed in this attack.

Again, on the 8th of March, FRELIMO guerrillas ambushed Portuguese troops in the zones of FURANCUNGO, FINGOE and VILA VASCO DA GAMA. However, we have not yet received the reports on these actions.

NAMES AND RANKS OF SOME(33) OF THE PORTUGUESE SOLDIERS KILLED IN THE FIGHT IN MOZAMBIQUE DURING MARCH, 1968
(as announced by the Information Services of the Portuguese Armed Forces):

Sub-lieutenants: Vitor Garcia Guerra
Luis Nunes

Sergeants: Hoene Mussagen
Higino Vieira Cunha

Corporals: Joao Albino Pimentel
Manuel Manhica
Joao Meque
Feliciano Cofiane

Corporals: Antonio Luis
Antonio S. Joao Dos Santos
Antonio Ribeiro Fernandes
Manuel Correia Dos Santos
Fernando Dos Santos
Domingos Fialho Silva
Quinteno Anastácio Risso Valerio

Marines: Manuel Silva
Adelino Octaviano

Privates: Gregorio Vicente
Joaquim Pereira Fernandes
Vitor Manuel Amador
Camilo Ferreira Alves
Manuel Lopes Baptista
Jose Louro
Manuel Fragata Francisco
Antonio Alves Mota
Antonio Jacinto Maci alela
Jose Maria Costa Barros
Cesar Simoes Alentejeiro
Amadeu Diniz
Jose Vieira Martins
Jacinto Guerreiro Curtinha
Hernani Gomes Pereira da Silva
Antonio Garcia Ferreira

IN 1967, OF THE 70,000 YOUTHS WHO WERE
SUPPOSED TO BE CONSCRIPTED IN THE POR-
TUGUESE ARMY, 14,000 DID NOT REPORT.

smith

sanctions

2 salazar

The French have a much easier route into Rhodesia than trying the complicated business of routing oil through Beira. They just take it 400 miles down the coast to Lourenço Marques, where nobody puts the least obstacle on their way

The refinery there is owned by the Portuguese SONAP Company through its refining subsidiary SONAREP. A minority shareholding of 27% in this subsidiary is held by the French Compagnie Française des Petroles, which most people know under its marketing name of Total. The French Government own 37% of CFP. Much more important, however, is the fact that Total has the exclusive contract for the supply of crude oil to the refinery.

The refinery's capacity is 800,000 tons a year..... it supplies Mozambique, whose needs are very small, and also the Johannesburg area of South Africa.....It also undoubtedly supplies Rhodesia with something like 200,000 tons a year- about half its annual requirement.

.....The success of the whole operation may be judged by the fact that the Rhodesians not only get their normal petrol ration but can buy more or less unlimited quantities of "free" petrol at a premium of about 1 shilling a gallon. They are also reported to have been able to build up something like one year's supply as a strategic reserve. "The Manchester Guardian Weekly 28.12.67."

This report highlights two under discussed aspects of the Southern African situation. One, of course, is the role that France, supposedly "champion of the Third World," is playing. This, however, has received more publicity since France's announcement that she would fill the gap left by Britain's continued refusal to supply arms to South Africa. The other is the intimate connection between Portugal and the Smith regime, which so far has been little publicised.

The question of Portugal and her territories has been

....

conspicuously absent from the noisy debate on Rhodesia. In January 1966 the Lonrho Beira pipeline temporarily became an issue and in April the same year Joanna V made headline news. More recently, however, the links between Mozambique and Rhodesia, just as those between Portugal and Britain, have been consistently soft pedalled by the British Government and the press, although after South Africa the attitude of the colonial government of Mozambique is the biggest factor contributing to the continued survival of the Smith regime. Here are a few facts which too often forgotten:

ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Portugal has been loudly complaining that in Mozambique she has lost 15 million Pounds as a result of sanctions, a good indication of how much Rhodesia and Mozambique depend on each other, which should lead us to ask what she is not losing, and what therefore Rhodesia is still gaining from the connection.

Transit Services: Mozambique derives 10% of her gross national income from transit services to or from Rhodesia. Stretching between Rhodesia and the sea she has always provided the main outlet for Rhodesian trade. Beira is by far the nearest port both to Salisbury and to Bulawayo. Road and rail services link these towns to Beira. A railway also links them with Lourenço Marques.

Labour: Although not nearly as important as the export of workers to South Africa, the export of Mozambican labour to Rhodesia is still considerable. In 1963, 119,871 Mozambicans went to work in Rhodesia, 6,387 of these to the mines (U.N. statistics). Mozambique gains in the taxes remitted by these migrant workers. Rhodesia gains an extra source of labour which, under constant threat of deportation is even more vulnerable than her own, to police action. The importance of this could increase if in the future the Zimbabweans attempt to take industrial action against Smith.

Tourism: The nearest stretch of coastline to Rhodesia is in Mozambique and every year about 80,000 white Rhodesians go to Mozambican resorts for their holidays. Mozambique is likely to increase in popularity now that Rhodesian passports and currency have been declared invalid in many other countries. Mozambique still accepts both. Thus her friendship takes much of the sting out of this move in the sanctions war.

Finance: Since Mozambique accepts illegal Rhodesian currency she can more generally be used as an outlet.../

for Rhodesian finance.

Trade: In 1965 trade between the two countries was of relatively small importance, Rhodesia accounting for 1.9 of Mozambique's imports and 3.1 of her exports. But it has increased in the last two years and there are signs that it may increase considerably in the future. In 1964 a commercial agreement was drawn up to start in 1965 allowing for most favoured nation treatment. The effects of this would not appear in the 1965 figures. In 1966 a mission of Portuguese bankers and industrialists visited Rhodesia to review the possibility of "an increase in commercial and industrial interchange between Metropolitan and Overseas Portugal and Rhodesia." (Tribuna 20.11.66). The previous July, the Rhodesian minister of commerce and industry, B.H. Musette stated at the Mozambique trade fair that "The principle object of the visit of the Rhodesian minister is to bring about a major increase in economic relations between Mozambique and Rhodesia." (Diario Popular - Lisbon 8.7.66).

POLITICAL ALLIANCE

There are clear commercial reasons why the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique are likely to do their best to help Rhodesia avoid sanctions, but this cooperation is based also on a close association of political interests. In 1965 Le Monde reported; "According to information drawn from diplomatic circles in Lisbon a secret treaty has been concluded between Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa for the defence of white Africa.....the treaty provides for the organisation of a common defence against nationalist or communist subversion" (Le Monde 14.9.65). Since UDI such friendly cooperation has certainly increased and PIDE (Portuguese Secret Police) cooperate closely with the Rhodesian police.

If the British Government were seriously interested in toppling the Smith regime, one of her moves would be to try to separate him from this useful ally. The surest way of achieving this would be to do everything in her power to assist the succession of a nationalist government in Mozambique. Yet, although a clear majority in the UN supports the demand of the Mozambican people for independence Britain consistently votes against resolutions on this question. In her relations with Portugal, after South Africa, Smith's most important ally, Britain, has limited herself to a few minor remonstrances concerning pipelines and tankers. Otherwise commercial and diplomatic relations continue with every sign of cordiality. Portugal, it seems, will continue to be Britain's oldest ally, partner in EFTA, partner in NATO and meanwhile, secure in these open ties of friendship, Portugal will continue to do every-./

thing in her power to make sanctions a failure and the Smith dictatorship a success.

While Britain pretends to be blind to the Smith-Salazar connection, the real enemies of both these dictatorships are not. We in FRELIMO are well aware that our struggle against Salazar is closely linked with the struggle against Smith and that a blow against one dictator is a blow against the other. While the supposed champions of Western democracy hedge, and retreat and appease the growing forces of fascism in Southern Africa, the people of Africa are fighting and will continue to fight.

S T A T E M E N T

The colonial-fascist government of Ian Smith continues its heinous crimes. This does not come as a surprise to us - our experience with Portuguese colonialism has taught us that the enemies of the people always commit criminal acts in order to deter the people's march to freedom.

It is clear that the pious words of the British government are nothing but attempts to deceive public opinion, which is well aware of British connivance with the Smith gangsters who seized power in Salisbury. This is also normal in view of the common racial and ethnic nature of the British and Rhodesians. It would in fact be surprising, to see British imperialism liberate the people of Zimbabwe, whom it exploits, from the yoke of the white racist government of Ian Smith, which it has created and which it practically supports.

The people of Mozambique and FRELIMO condemn the murder of the African patriots by the colonial-fascist Rhodesian regime, and consider these crimes as being consistent with the behaviour of the enemies of the people. The use of murder is Smith's answer to the development of the national conscience and of the mobilisation of the people of Zimbabwe. Sooner or later Smith, as already Vorster and Salazar, will start assassinating the populations of whole villages, to bomb and destroy people's crops, hospitals, schools. Sooner or later the colonial fascist Rhodesian regime will change from murders through the courts, resorting to naked wide-scale massacres of old people, children and women. This genocidal escalation will increase in proportion to the growth and strengthening of the people's forces.

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The experience of the last 4 years of armed struggle in Mozambique, leads the Central Committee of FRELIMO to conclude that there is only one efficient way to support the people of Zimbabwe: by stepping up the revolutionary activities against colonialism and imperialism in the whole of Southern Africa - in Mozambique, Angola, South West Africa; and simultaneously to increase the moral, diplomatic and principally material support to the people of Zimbabwe, for them to be able to develop, generalise and consolidate the people's war for national liberation.

The people of Mozambique, led by FRELIMO, are today paralising, neutralising and progressively annihilating more than 60,000 soldiers of the Portuguese colonial government, which is one of the main allies of the Rhodesian regime. We consider this our specific contribution to the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe.

LONG LIVE THE PEOPLE's WAR FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION!

LONG LIVE THE ZIMBABWE PEOPLE's STRUGGLE!

LONG LIVE THE SOLIDARITY OF THE PEOPLE OF MOZAMBIQUE AND ZIMBABWE!

DEATH TO SMITH, SALAZAR AND VORSTER!

The Central Committee of FRELIMO

Dar Es Salaam, 14th March, 1968.



"IF I COMPARE ...

Cotton-growing time was a time of great poverty

I come from Cabo Delgado Province. I was born in IMBUHO, a cotton-growing region, in 1942. I am the son of a peasant and my name is GABRIEL MAURICIO NANTIMBO. We cultivate maize, cassava, groundnuts and cotton. My whole family produced cotton for the Companhia Agricola Algodoxeira. When the company came to exploit our region everyone was forced to cultivate one field of cotton. Each person was given seeds. Then one had to clear the field, thin the cotton, because when there are too many plants the cotton does not grow well, and then remove the weeds. Finally, after the harvest the company told us where to take the cotton and then bought it from us. They paid us very little for it. It was extremely difficult to make a living because we were badly paid and we didn't have the time to look after our other crops: cotton needs constant attention; you have to keep weeding the field and thinning out the plants.

Cotton-growing time was a time of great poverty because we could only produce cotton, we got a poor price for it and we did not have time to grow other crops. We were forced to produce cotton. The people didn't want to: they knew that cotton is the mother of poverty but the company was protected by the government. We knew that anyone who refused to grow it would be sent to the plantations of S. TOME' where he would work without any pay at all. So as not to make our poverty even greater, then, so as not to leave the family and leave the children to suffer alone, we had to grow cotton. My uncle had a field of cotton like everyone else. One day he fell sick and could not look after the field. The company manager sent him to the authorities and he told them that he was sick. A man under domination is like a goat: you can do what you want with him. The administrator said to him, "you're a bad man. What you want is to avoid work. Do you think others don't fall sick? Is everyone who works the fields in good health?"

My uncle replied,

"There are different sorts of illness. With some you can go on working, with others you can't. I couldn't work." They arrested my uncle and sent him to S. TOME' for a year.

I went to the IMBUHO Mission school and then to the school at MARERE. I studied at the mission but weren't well taught. In the first place they taught only what

...../

they wanted us to learn - the catechism; they didn't want us to learn other things. Then every morning we had to work on the mission land. They said our fathers didn't pay for our food or our school things. The mission also received money from the government and our families paid them fees. After 1958 our parents even had to buy the hoes with which we cultivated the mission land.

Previously I was in a state of servitude but I didn't know it. I thought that was just how the world was. I didn't know that Mozambique was our country. The books said we were Portuguese. Then about 1961 I began to hear other things. The old men in their cooperatives were also beginning to agitate. In 1962 even the children saw the truth. FRELIMO began operating in our zone. Some comrades explained about it and I wanted to join. By the end of 1962 even the government felt that the party was growing and they started a great campaign of repression, arresting and torturing everyone they suspected. Many preferred to die rather than betray their comrades. But the party gained strength. The leaders explained the truth to us, taught us our own strength and we saw clearly how Mozambique, which belongs to us and not to Portugal, had been dominated.

Now there is the war. If I compare the present with the past I see that in my region the people have a better life. There are difficulties but it's different. When the people produce crops now they eat better; the companies don't come to rob them; there is no forced labour, our people are free; we can say that the war is liberating the people.

We are also united. In the units I have been in there were people from all over. The colonialists want to divide us. Since 1963 when I joined FRELIMO I have fought together with comrades from all the tribes of Mozambique. In all sectors where I have worked I have seen the national dimension of our struggle. Our struggle is a political and military struggle but the military struggle is an aspect of our political struggle; without the people we are nothing; divided we are weak and can be defeated.

We shall fight. I want to rid our country of foreign domination. We shall win.

GABRIEL M. NANTIMBO

FRELIMO PRESIDENT IN UK

From 6 to 10th March, 1968, the president of FRELIMO, Comrade Mondlane, visited the U.K., at the invitation of several organisations, among which the MOVEMENT FOR COLONIAL FREEDOM, and the ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT. The FRELIMO president gave a press conference at the House of Commons, was interviewed by several newspapers, and spoke in public meetings in the AFRICA CENTRE, CHATHAM HOUSE (Institute of International Affairs); he also participated in a congress organised by University Students at OXFORD. During this visit, the documentary film "VENCEREMOS" (WE SHALL WIN), shot in the liberated areas of Mozambique was shown, on BEC/TV.

The president of FRELIMO explained to the British people the situation in Mozambique, the reasons for our liberation struggle, our successes and our difficulties. Everywhere, Comrade Mondlane had an enthusiastic welcome, which proves that the British people, as well as the other people of the whole world, is in solidarity with the struggle for liberation of the oppressed peoples.

Interesting to note in this visit was the reaction of the Portuguese Government, which presented a formal protest to the British Government, for having allowed "the terrorist Mondlane to enter the U.K. and to make speeches in which he denigrated the virtues which characterise and dignify the actions of the Portuguese". The British Government answered by saying that anyone can enter the U.K. and say whatever he wants as long as the laws of the country are not breached.

This attitude of the British Government, however, must not deceive us. The British were aware that the FRELIMO president had been invited by popular organisations, and that any ban or repressive action would cause a popular reaction. The principal aim of the visit of our president to U.K. was precisely to try to mobilise the British public opinion, so that it would force the British Government to diminish the support it gives to the colonialist Government of Portugal. This is in accordance with the policy of FRELIMO of seeking support for our liberation struggle among all peoples in the world.

It is known for example that it was the fear of public opinion, the only reason which prevented Wilson from sending troops to Vietnam. The British people therefore can force Wilson to change his position towards the colonial policy of Portugal - although we are aware that that change could not be significant, at least in the near future, nor would it affect the imperialist basic principles of the relations between the 2 countries.

The conclusions of this visit were:-

There is very little knowledge of the Portuguese territories in England, but with an increasing awareness that the problem of Southern Africa must be treated as a whole there is now more interest. Therefore, although there is very little hope of change at governmental level, the people are ready to support FRELIMO, particularly while the government is so weak on the Rhodesian problem. It is worth maintaining contacts with the progressive movements and trying to improve them among politicians and the public at large. Politicians to influence the government and the public to persuade them that Portugal will eventually collapse and Mozambique become independent; therefore, it is not a good idea to support Portugal.

"....At the United Nations Britain has consistently opposed any move to condemn the Portuguese regime. It has sided in this with a regime such as that of South Africa.

Britain is Portugal's best customer. British investments in Portugal have been growing. A recent big British loan worth 50,000,000 Pounds was granted to the Portuguese Steel Industry and for iron mining, which are vital for Salazar's colonial wars. Britain is a partner of Portugal in NATO, and NATO has provided plenty of military equipment and know-how for the Portuguese army, without which the fascist regime could not last at home or in the colonies.

Britain must stop giving economic support to the Salazar regime by her investments which profit from cheap Portuguese or African labour. Britain must stop her support of Portuguese policies at the United Nations. Britain must refuse to have Portugal as her partner in NATO. The British people can democratically force their government to take this course of action."

From: "Portuguese and Colonial Bull"

January, 1968.

THE STANDARD, Tuesday, March 26, 1968

FRELIMO OPEN

UP NEW

WAR ZONE

THE Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) said in Dar es Salaam yesterday that its freedom fighters had re-opened a war zone in the Portuguese territory along the Zambezi River in Tete Province.

One of their main targets would be the massive, internationally-financed Zambezi dam project at Cabora Bassa, Frelimo's president, Dr. Eduardo Mondlane said at a Press conference.

If they could not prevent its construction, they would at least make it almost prohibitively expensive.

Dr. Mondlane said his forces had already broken through the Portuguese first line of defence, to operate in the far south of Niassa, Mozambique's North Western Province.

The struggle in Tete had been going on in 1964 and 1965 but due to difficulties, he said, the front had to be closed temporarily, concentrating all action in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, both of which border Tanzania.

Frelimo's fighters in Tete went underground and continued politi-

tical mobilisation of the people. "It was the work of these Frelimo militants over three years which has now enabled us to resume the armed struggle for liberation in Tete," he stated.

Tete was the second Portuguese defence line, Dr. Mondlane said, and in conjunction with the Cabora Bassa dam, the Lisbon Government planned to install one million settlers there to hold it.

The Frelimo task there would be tough, Dr. Mondlane admitted.

Intelligence reports said a battalion of South African troops were stationed at the dam site and several companies elsewhere in the area.

But the population had been mobilised and Frelimo had already gone into action in Tete, killing more than a dozen Portuguese troops in ambushes and raids since March 6.